

Senator Manchin's Work on Black Lung Issues

January 2011: Senator Manchin joins Senator Jay Rockefeller in reintroducing the Robert C. Byrd Mine and Workplace Safety and Health Act to not only combat workplace safety, but also limit miners' exposure to breathable dust exposure levels that lead to Black Lung disease. This was originally introduced in 2010 after the Upper Big Branch mine disaster that hit in Montcoal, West Virginia on April 5, 2010.

July 2012: Senator Manchin issues statement of support expressing that his top priority for the coal industry is to keep coal miners safe and healthy.

April 2013: Senator Manchin along-side Senator Jay Rockefeller, reintroduced the Robert C. Byrd Mine and Workplace Safety and Health Act.

March 2014: Senators Manchin, joins Senators Jay Rockefeller (D-WV), Bob Casey (D-PA), Tom Harkin (D-IA), and Congressmen Nick Rahall (D-WV-3), George Miller (D-CA-11) , and Joe Courtney (D-CT-2) in a letter to then Secretary of Labor Tom Perez pushing DOL to eliminate unfair burdens miners face when applying for Black Lung benefits.

April 2014: Senators Manchin and Rockefeller and Congressman Rahall call on the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services opposing changes to the Black Lung Clinics Grant Program that would unfairly burden West Virginians suffering from Black Lung disease.

April 2014: Senator Manchin applauds the Mine Safety and Health Administration's (MSHA) new rule that lowers miners' exposure to coal dust in all underground and surface coal mines.

July 2014: Senator Manchin submits a statement expressing support for Miners' Black Lung Benefits to the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee Hearing.

November 2014: Senator Manchin alongside Senators Jay Rockefeller (D-WV), Bob Casey (D-PA), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Tom Harkin (D-IA), and Mark Warner (D-VA) introduced legislation that would prevent coal companies from unfairly denying benefits to deserving miners and their families.

April 2015: Senator Manchin urges West Virginians to comment on the U.S. Department of Labor's proposed rule that would improve Black Lung benefits by addressing obstacles that prevent miners with Black Lung from receiving benefits, reforms that were offered in Senator Manchin's 2013 legislation, the Black Lung Benefits Improvement Act.

September 2015: Senator Manchin alongside Senators Bob Casey (D-PA), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Mark Warner (D-VA), and Tim Kaine (D-VA) introduce the Black Lung Benefits Improvement Act of 2015 in an effort to overhaul the Black Lung Benefits Program to make it easier for those affected to qualify for benefits. A companion bill was filed in the House of Representatives.

January 2017: Senator Manchin filed an amendment to the budget resolution that would protect the Byrd Amendments in the Affordable Care Act (ACA) by placing a budget point of order on any legislation that would shift the burden of proof of disability due to black lung away from industry and back on the miners.

April 2017: Senator Manchin along with Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) introduced the Black Lung Benefits Improvement Act of 2017 and the Robert C. Byrd Mine Safety Protection Act of 2017 that would reform the federal program that provides benefits to coal miners suffering from Black Lung disease and allow MSHA the tools to improve mine safety.

July 2017: Senator Manchin votes against the repeal of the ACA, because there was no plan to replace it and no plan for miners with black lung to access the healthcare they need.

August 2018: Senator Manchin and Senator Shelly Moore Capito (R-WV) introduced legislation that would improve early detection of black lung disease among coal miners.

December 2018: Senator Manchin sends a letter to Congressional Leadership urging the inclusion of critical miners' priorities in the end-of-year spending package. Specifically, he requested the addition of orphan miners from the 2018 bankruptcies into the Coal Act, a permanent fix to ensure the UMWA 1974 Pension Plan remains solvent, and an extension of the coal excise tax at current levels to maintain support for the Black Lung Disability Trust Fund.

January 2019: Senator Manchin introduces the American Miners Act (S. 27) along with Senators Tim Kaine (D-VA), Mark Warner (D-VA), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Doug Jones (D-AL), and Bob Casey (D-PA). This bill would address the insolvency of the 1974 UMWA Pension Fund and prevent its collapse while securing pensions for over 92,000 miners and their families. It would also protect healthcare benefits for 15,000 miners and their dependents and restore the Black Lung Disability Trust Fund contribution rate.

April 2019: Senator Manchin sends a letter to Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-IA) and Ranking Member Ron Wyden (D-OR) urging them to include American Miners Act provisions in the Tax Extenders package that the Finance Committee is drafting.

June 2019: During Senate consideration of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), one of Congress' yearly "must-pass" bills, Senator Manchin offered the American Miners Act as an amendment. Unfortunately, despite securing unanimous support from the entire Democratic caucus, the Senate was not given an opportunity to vote on this amendment.

July 2019: Senator Manchin, along with Senators Bob Casey (D-PA), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Tim Kaine (D-VA), and Mark Warner (D-VA) reintroduce the Black Lung Benefits Improvement Act of 2019 which expands coal miners' access to the Black Lung Benefits program.

October 2019: Senator Manchin along with 10 other Senators introduced the American Miners Act as an amendment to H.R. 3055, the Fiscal Year 202 Appropriations Minibus. Unfortunately, despite strong support, the Senate was not given the opportunity to vote on this amendment.

December 2019: Senator Manchin secures a one-year restoration excise tax to fund the Black Lung Disability Trust Fund through December 31, 2020.

January 2020: Senator Manchin, along with Senators Bob Casey (D-PA), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Tim Kaine (D-VA), and Mark Warner (D-VA) introduce the Black Lung Benefits Disability Trust Fund Solvency Act of 2020 to secure the Black Lung Disability Trust Fund through December 31, 2030.

April 2020: Senator Manchin urged DOL Secretary Eugene Scalia and HHS Secretary Alex Azar to immediately provide clinics and the miners they serve with clear, written guidance regarding how miner's black lung benefit claims will be processed during the COVID-19 pandemic and what specific flexibilities are being instituted to ensure miners do not lose access to essential benefits and treatment

through no fault of their own.

[May 2020](#): Senator Manchin announced more than \$2 million to support Black Lung Clinic Programs across the state.

[November 2020](#): Senator Manchin led a group of Senators in urging MSHA to take immediate action to protect miners from excess silica exposure after the DOL OIG published a report on the inadequate measures currently in place to protect miners from the harmful carcinogen linked to deadly respiratory diseases such as black lung, silicosis, and progressive massive fibrosis.

[March 2021](#): Senator Manchin led five Senators in introducing the Relief for Survivors of Miners Act to ease the burden on surviving families of miners who pass away due to black lung disease.

[June 2021](#): Senator Manchin announced more than \$2 million to support Black Lung Clinic Programs across the state.

[September 2021](#): Senator Manchin led a group of Senators in reintroducing the Black Lung Benefits Disability Trust Fund Act of 2021. The legislation calls for a ten-year extension of the current black lung excise tax to ensure that coal miners suffering from Black Lung Disease and their families have access to the quality medical care they desperately need.

[July 2022](#): Senator Manchin reintroduced the Black Lung Benefits Improvement Act to ensure miners who have suffered from Black Lung disease and their survivors can access the benefits they need and deserve.

[July 2022](#): Senator Manchin announced more than \$2 million to support Black Lung Clinic Programs across the state.

[August 2022](#): Senator Manchin's Inflation Reduction Act was signed into law and included a permanent extension of the black lung excise tax to fund the Black Lung Disability Trust Fund (BLDTF) that provides health insurance and a living stipend for those impacted by black lung.

[November 2022](#): Senator Manchin led a group of Senators in pushing MSHA Assistant Secretary Chris Williamson for answers on the delayed announcement of a new silica standard for miners across America, especially Appalachia.

[March 2023](#): Senator Manchin led a group of seven Senators in urging GAO Comptroller General Gene Dodaro to conduct a study to evaluate the adequacy of current black lung benefits in meeting income and healthcare needs of disabled miners and their families. The study is critical to informing policy aimed at supporting coal miners and their families in West Virginia and across Appalachia.

[May 2023](#): Senator Manchin announced more than \$2 million from HHS to strengthen Black Lung clinic programs in West Virginia.

[June 2023](#): Senator Manchin led a letter OMB Director Shalanda Young, urging for additional information on the delayed announcement of a new silica standard for miners across America, especially Appalachia.

[June 2023](#): Senator Manchin released a statement on the DOL's proposal by its Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) to amend current federal standards to better protect the nation's miners from health hazards related to exposure to respirable crystalline silica, or silica dust.